

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 02947 091456Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 /091 W
-----092149Z 096113 /41

R 091405Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3016
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY YEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
DIA WASHDC
USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 2947

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR SY AU
SUBJ: AUSTRIAN CHANCELLOR'S VISIT TO DAMASCUS

1. SUMMARY:

AUSTRIAN CHANCELLOR VISITED SYRIA MAY 4-6 WITH LOW-
LEVEL DELEGATION. KREISKY ACCORDED SOLICITOUS TREAT-
MENT INCLUDING THREE-HOUR TETE A TETE WITH AL-ASSAD AND MEETING
WITH ARAFAT AND QADDUMI. SYRIANS INTERESTED IN HIS PERCEPTIONS
OF EFFECTS CURRENT ISRAELI INTERNAL POLITICS ON ISRAELI
FOREIGN POLICY. BILATERAL QUESTIONS SEEMED TO HAVE RECEIVED ONLY
PERFUNCTORY TREATMENT. FINAL COMMUNIQUE, AFTER BRIEF BUT
INTENSE WRANGLE, CONTAINED COMPROMISE LANGUAGE ON ISRAELI
WITHDRAWAL -FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORY AND PLO/PALESTINIAN
REPRESENTATION AT GENEVA. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBOFF BRIEFED BY AUSTRIAN EMBOFF ON VISIT CHANCELLOR
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PAGE 02 DAMASC 02947 091456Z

BRUNO KREISKY MADE TO DAMASCUS MAY 4-6. KREISKY INVITED
BY SYRIA TO VISIT AT THIS TIME TO RETURN PREVIOUS VISIT FORMER
SYRIAN PRIMIN AYYUBI MADE TO AUSTRIA. INVITATION HAD BEEN
ISSUED SOME TIME AGO, AND SYRIANS URGED AUSTRIANS IN LATE
FEBRUARY TO SCHEDULE VISIT FOR THIS TIME. ACCOMPANYING
CHANCELLOR WERE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF NATIONALIZED INDUSTRIES,
GENERAL MANAGER OF DEFENSE INDUSTRIES AND PRESS DELEGATION.

3. AUSTRIAN CLAIMED CHANCELLOR HAD BEEN EXTREMELY PLEASED WITH RECEPTION SYRIANS ACCORDED HIM. HE WAS ESCORTED ON MANY OF HIS CALLS BY PRIMIN KHULAYFAWI AND LARGE NUMBER OF SYRIAN MINISTERS PARTICIPATED IN VARIOUS ASPECTS OF VISIT. BESIDES SEVERAL MEETINGS WITH KHULAYFAWI, CHANCELLOR WAS GIVEN LUNCHEON BY PRESIDENT AL-ASSAD MAY 5 AFTER WHICH THEY ADJOURNED FOR THREE HOUR TETE A TETE. AT REQUEST OF PLO REP TO UNIDO, WHO FLEW ON SAME PLANE AS KREISKY, AND ENDORSEMENT FROM HIS SYRIAN HOSTS, KREISKY MET WITH ARAFAT, QADDUMI AND ABU MAYZAR AS WELL AS PLO UNIDO REP GHAZI HUSSEIN.

4. TALKS BASICALLY POLITICAL AND FOCUSED ON EFFORTS FOR ME SETTLEMENT. SYRIANS SOUGHT KREISKY'S INSIGHTS INTO ISRAELI POLITICS BASED UPON HIS KNOWLEDGE OF ISRAEL'S LEADERS AND HIS ATTENDANCE AT ISRAELI ALIGHMENT CONVENTION. KREISKY TOLD EMBOFF STAFF THAT HE DID NOT SEE PERES AS ANY LESS REASONABLE A MAN THAN RABIN AND EXPECTED LITTLE CHANGE IN ISRAELI POSITIONS AS RESULT OF RABIN'S RESIGNATION EXCEPT POSSIBLY FOR THE BETTER SINCE HE REGARDS PERES AS MORE IMAGINATIVE.

5. SYRIAN AND AUSTRIAN SIDES EVENING MAY 5 BROKE DOWN INTO POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND DEFENSE GROUPS TO DISCUSS BILATERAL QUESTIONS. AUSTRIANS EXPLAINED THEY UNABLE TO SUPPLY ANY TYPE OF WEAPONRY AND COULD ONLY SELL NON-LETHAL EQUIPMENT. POSSIBLE AUSTRIAN ASSISTANCE TO SYRIAN AGRICULTURE WAS ALSO DISCUSSED. ON MORNING MAY 5,
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PAGE 03 DAMASC 02947 091456Z

ESCORTED BY KHULAYFAWI AND DEPPRIMIN SHAYYA, KREISKY FLEW TO EUPHRATES DAM IN WHICH HE WAS INTERESTED GIVEN AUSTRIA'S HEAVY RELIANCE ON HYDRO-ELECTRIC POWER.

6. NEAR END OF VISIT, BOTH SIDES AGREED ON DESIRABILITY ISSUING FINAL COMMUNIQUE BUT RAN INTO DIFFICULTIES IN DRAFTING LANGUAGE PERTAINING TO QUESTIONS OF ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND PALESTINIAN/PLO REPRESENTATION AT GENEVA. ACCORDING TO AUSTRIAN EMBOFF, SYRIANS WANTED REFERENCE TO NECESSITY OF ISRAEL'S WITHDRAWING FROM "ALL OCCUPIED TERRITORY" WHILE THE AUSTRIANS WOULD NOT GO BEYOND TEXT OF RES. 242. SINCE NEITHER SIDE COULD ACCEPT THE OTHER'S LANGUAGE, THEY AGREED MERELY TO CALL FOR "THE NECESSITY OF ESTABLISHING A JUST AND PERMANENT PEACE ON THE BASIS OF ALL U.N. RESOLUTIONS PERTAINING TO THE MIDDLE EAST." MOREOVER, SYRIANS WANTED MENTION OF NECESSITY FOR PLO REPRESENTATION AT GENEVA, WHEREAS AUSTRIANS WISHED GO NO FURTHER THAN EXPRESSION THAT THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE SHOULD BE REPRESENTED AT GENEVA.

COMPROMISE LANGUAGE IN FINAL COMMUNIQUE CALLED FOR NECESSITY
OF ALL CONCERNED PARTIES TO BE REPRESENTED AT GENEVA.
EARLIER PORTIONS OF COMMUNIQUE WERE GENERAL AND NOTED GOOD
RELATIONS EXISTING BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND DESIRE TO
IMPROVE RELATIONS IN VARIOUS SPHERES INCLUDING ECONOMIC,
CULTURAL, TECHNICAL, AND SCIENTIFIC.

7. COMMENT:

NO OTHER AUSTRIANS WERE PRESENT DURING KREISKY'S THREE
HOUR PRIVATE MEETING WITH AL-ASSAD, AND AUSTRIAN EMBOFF
WAS UNABLE TO PROVIDE DETAILS. EMBASSY VIENNA MAY BE
ABLE TO PROVIDE FURTHER INFO.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HEAD OF GOVERNMENT VISITS, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977DAMASC02947
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770163-0247
Format: TEL
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770580/aaaacqvl.tel
Line Count: 130
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 5e8d4698-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2602662
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AUSTRIAN CHANCELLOR'S VISIT TO DAMASCUS
TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, SY, AU, (KREISKY, BRUNO), (ASAD, HAFIZ)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/5e8d4698-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009